



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 106th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 146

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, JULY 17, 2000

No. 92

Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

We praise You, dear God. You have promised never to leave or forsake us. Our confidence is in You and not ourselves. We come to You in prayer, not trusting our own goodness but solely in Your grace. You are our joy when we get down, our strength when we are weak, our courage when we vacillate. You are our security in a world of change and turmoil. Even when we forget You in the rush of life, You never forget us. Thank You for Your faithfulness.

At this moment we claim that faithfulness for our friend, Senator PAUL COVERDELL, as he undergoes surgery. Bless him, care for him, and heal him.

And now dear God, filled with wonder, love, and gratitude, we commit this week to live and work for You, inviting the indwelling power of Your spirit. Bless the Senators. Control their minds and give them Your discernment. Give them boldness to take stands for what You have revealed is the application of Your righteousness and justice for our Nation.

Thank You for the privilege of living this week for You. In Your all powerful name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable PETER G. FITZGERALD, a Senator from the State of Illinois, led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FITZGERALD). The majority leader.

Mr. LOTT. I thank the Chair.

PRAYERS AND REFLECTIONS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I express my appreciation also once again to our Chaplain of the Senate, Lloyd John Ogilvie, and for his remembering our friend and my most trusted confidante, most reliable lieutenant, the Senator from Georgia, PAUL COVERDELL. I don't know of a Senator who works any harder or has a more indomitable spirit. I noticed particularly Friday afternoon how happy he was as he took leave of this Chamber because of the vote that we had just taken and realizing that he would have the opportunity to be home in Georgia on Friday afternoon and on Saturday. Our thoughts and our prayers are with him as he apparently undergoes a surgical procedure at this hour. I thank the Chaplain for his prayer.

Coincidentally, this weekend I also had a little more time than I anticipated and was able to spend some time thinking about our country and reading some books. One of those that I read was "Going For The Max," by Senator MAX CLELAND, also of Georgia. It is a really inspirational book about his life and his experience as a Vietnam veteran and the recovery period he had to go through and the inspiration from things he had learned in his life—12 principles of life that he had learned and on which he relies. I talked to him this morning to tell him how much I enjoyed his book; that I was inspired by it. And he said he was at that very moment standing there looking at Piedmont Hospital where our friend, Senator COVERDELL, is, and he was saying a prayer for him. He offered to cover any meetings or appointments that needed to be done today or this week by Senator COVERDELL.

That is the kind of real love and appreciation and bipartisanship we need more of in this institution and in our lives. So I encourage my colleagues in

the Senate, if you have not read it, get a copy of "Going For The Max," and it will be an inspiration to you.

SCHEDULE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 3 p.m. with Senators BYRD and THOMAS in control of the time.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the Interior appropriations bill, and hopefully we will be able to complete our deliberations on that bill and get to final passage on all amendments and the bill itself tomorrow morning.

Under the previous agreement, there are up to 10 amendments remaining to the Interior bill that must be offered and debated during today's session. Hopefully, some of those amendments will be withdrawn, others will be accepted, and maybe we will not need to have more than a couple of them actually voted on, and then go to final passage tomorrow morning. I believe those votes will be stacked in the morning at 9:45 a.m.

At 6:15 this evening, the Senate will begin the final votes on the reconciliation bill which provides for the elimination of the marriage penalty tax. Senators should be aware that during the remainder of the afternoon on Friday, when all amendments were offered and/or debated, almost 40 potential votes could occur in regard to this legislation.

Again, I hope and I think that several of those amendments were just filed as a precaution and that not nearly that many will actually require a vote; some of them can be accepted. But I do expect there will be somewhere between 10 and 15, at least, that will require a recorded vote. We will try to do a major portion of those tonight, if not all of them. We may try to get a consent to finish the remainder of the votes on amendments and final passage tomorrow morning after we take a

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S6991

look at exactly how many we are going to have to do, look at how many we would have to vote on tonight, how many we would have to vote on in the morning, and try to be reasonable in how we schedule those votes. But we do need to get both of them completed not later than tomorrow morning. So votes are expected into the night. We could have, I guess, conceivably 10, 15, or more votes tonight beginning at 6:15. Of course, we have stacked them and the votes will be limited to 10 minutes in length after the first vote. Senators will be encouraged to remain in the Chamber again during the votes.

We were able to record 10 votes in about 1½ hours I think on Friday, which probably is some kind of new record. A lot of the credit for that goes to Senator HARRY REID, the assistant minority leader, because he stayed in the Chamber and helped me make sure that we wrapped those votes up as quickly as was possible.

This will be an important week. After we complete those two very important issues, we will need to go to the Agriculture appropriations bill which has been awaiting action in the Senate now for probably a month. Senator COCHRAN has indicated he will be ready to go tomorrow morning or right after lunch, whichever is available to him, to begin debate on this very important legislation.

We also would like to have the opportunity to consider the energy and water appropriations bill this week also. It is ready and should not take a lot of time. But that will depend on how long it takes on the Agriculture appropriations bill.

I see smiles throughout the Chamber, the idea that we would complete these two bills I have already mentioned and then take up two appropriations bills, but with determination we can get it done.

We achieved more last week than most people thought we would be able to do. It took work and it took some time and it took cooperation between leaders on both sides of the aisle. We were able to get that. I hope we can do it this week. I thank my colleagues for their participation and their cooperation.

With that, I will yield the floor and I observe the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONSERVATION REINVESTMENT ACT

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, on the eve of marking up the Conservation Reinvestment Act—an act that can only be described as great politics but very bad policy—to enact a law that

gives the Federal Government a blank check to buy land for the purpose of conservation, preservation, or any other so called environmental cause is ill-advised and ill-conceived, it appears, on the surface, the idea of putting land under Federal control for conservation purposes is a good idea and good policy for the nation. However, under the surface, hidden in the dark side of government ownership of lands, it is very bad policy.

Nobody has hunted or fished and appreciated it more than this Senator. Nobody enjoys the outdoors as much as I do—the cold crisp mornings in a hunting camp or a fishing camp is unequaled and one would not need a fishing rod or a rifle.

I would say that nobody in this body has fought harder for habitat and policies that promote the enjoyment of the outdoors, hunting, and fishing. As former cochairman of the sportman's caucus and still active in the foundation, we guard this privilege.

There is no way, Mr. President, this piece of legislation can be made to reflect or fulfill our role in the protection and improvement of our public lands. Just adding acres to the Federal estate does not get it done. Just no way. The supporters of this legislation has been blinded by the prospects of dollars, free dollars coming to their respective States. The money comes from royalties from off-shore drilling. I have no problem with that and, in fact, support such a scheme. It is the purchasing of land for the Federal estate that I cannot support.

I ask your patience to bear with me but I feel some facts should be made part of this record and my colleagues need reminding of some startling facts.

The Federal Government now controls one-third of the land in the United States. That is wrong and was never intended to be as envisioned by the Founders of our Nation nor the Framers of our Constitution.

However, the Federal Government has from its first day, a healthy appetite for land ownership and has never stopped acquiring more and more land. Some for good and solid reasons. In the last 40 years, however, land acquisition has been under the guise of conservation and preservation.

Do we have enough surplus of money to squander on the idea that the Federal Government needs more land.

Since 1960, major Federal land agencies have added 33.6 million acres of land. That is the area the size of Florida.

These agencies control more than 612 million acres or just over one-fourth of the land area of the United States.

True, the majority of Americans support land conservation and some acquisition, but few know or understand what it entails.

Most of those demanding public ownership of lands have come from groups who have little regard for private land ownership or property rights as provided by our Constitution. Land owner-

ship is the cornerstone to individual freedom which most Americans hold very dear. Have you not seen the movie, "The Patriot"?

... A major increase in Federal funding for land acquisition has long been needed. There is a tremendous backlog in land purchases. ...

So says Carl Pope, Ex. Director of the Sierra Club.

Ron Tipton, a vice president of the National Park Conservation Association echoes the same line.

I would suggest that both organizations have the money and the political will to buy land for conservation, preservation, or to heal some real or perceived environmental ill. The problem arises that they also would be responsible for the operation and management of the lands.

That being the case, why in the world does the Federal Government need more land? That is why I started to do some research some 3 or 4 years ago and using some information gathered by very credible organizations, I was startled what I found.

The Congressional Budget Office has gone so far as to suggest a freeze on Federal acquisitions. A 1999 report asserts:

Land management agencies should improve their stewardship of the lands they already own before taking on additional acreage and management responsibilities.

Environmental objectives might be best met by improving that they already own.

There is one glaring fact that throughout our history, private individuals and groups have offered the best and most sound resource conservation. Several organizations such as the Sierra Club has the funds and expertise to do and I suggest they proceed.

Here is CBO's concern. BLM, USF&W, and NPS have added 840,000 acres per year since 1960. That is the area the size of Rhode Island.

In the 1990's, 3.4 million acres and 25 new units for NPS; 2.7 million acres and 24 new units for USF&W; plus 18 million acres in military installations, 8.5 million acres in BOR, and 11.7 million acres in the Corps of Engineers. Even the conservation reserve "CRP" controls 33 million acres.

SPIRALING COSTS AND BALLOONING BUDGETS

Here are the reasons the Congressional Budget Office suggested a freeze in land acquisition:

Annual costs for land management have far outpaced the rate at which the Federal estate was expanding.

For the past 40 years, government's appetite for land ownership grew the total acres just over 6 percent, yet operating budgets have risen 262 percent above inflation.

From 1962 to 1998, land acquisition cost \$10.5 billion. At that same time-frame, managing Federal lands cost \$176 billion, \$6.6 billion in 1999 alone.

It is a little easier to grasp when one looks at the cost of management in 1962 at \$3 per acre. In 1997 the cost has grown to \$10 per acre adjusted for inflation.